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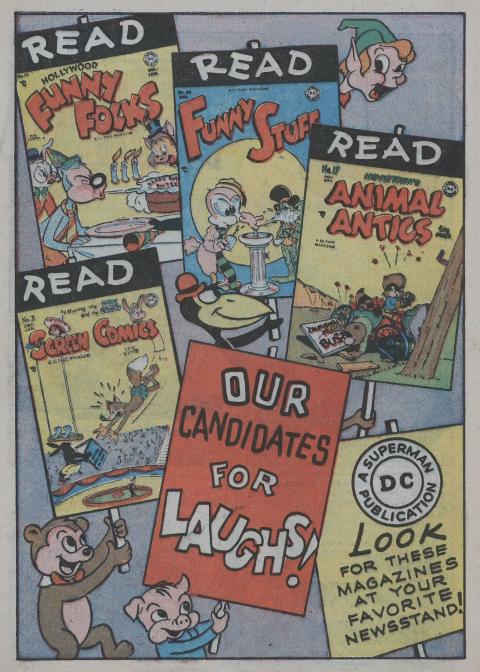




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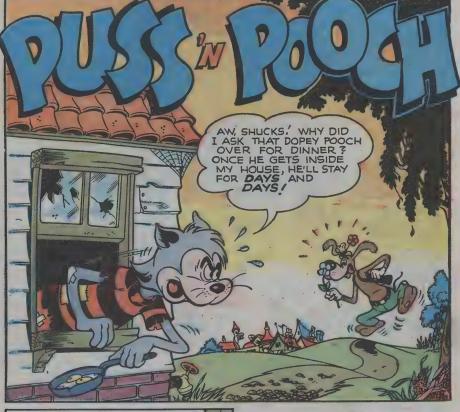




























































































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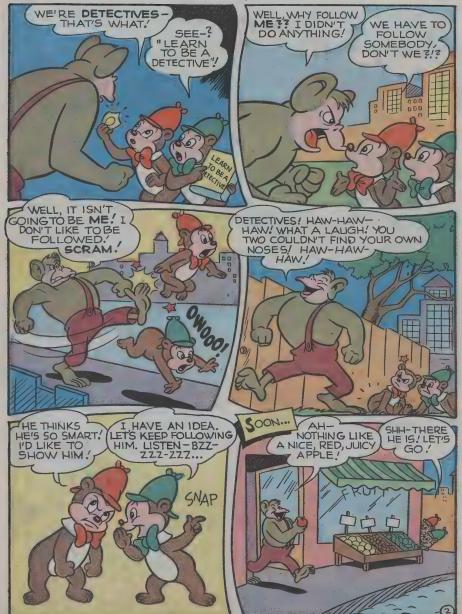




























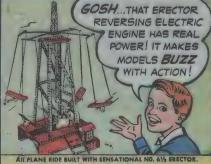












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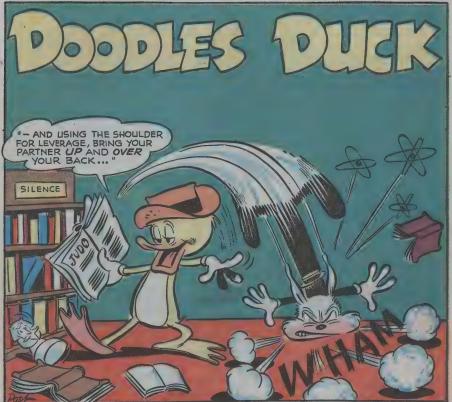
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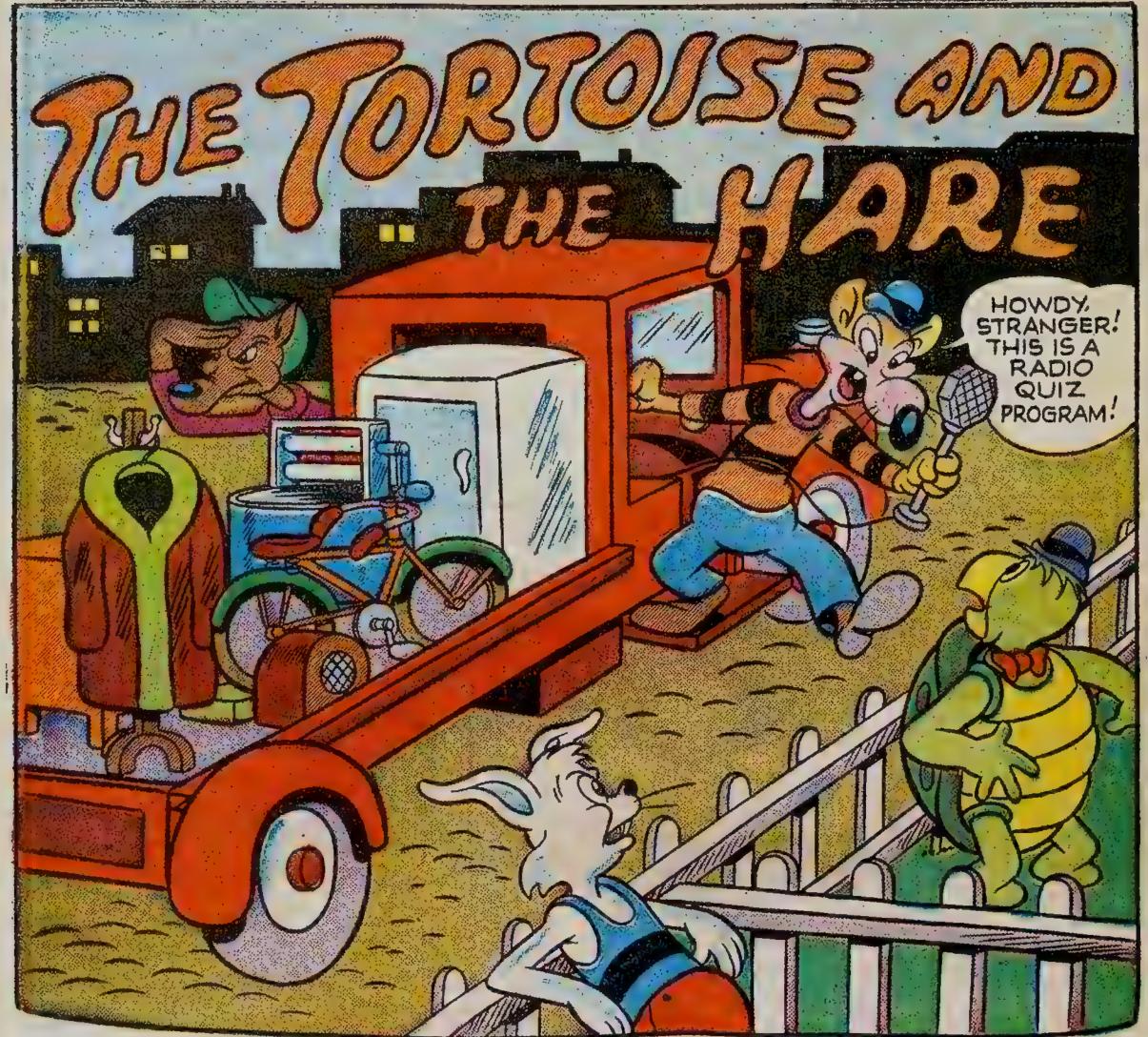






































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Why The Pelican Has A Big Bill

PAT PARROT looked across the Deep Pool and saw nothing or nobody. Nothing, that is, except a half-sunken log out near the middle. Suddenly a shadow appeared on the water. It grew bigger and bigger. Then there was the sound of flapping wings, and a moment later Peter Pelican settled down on the half-sunken log. It sank out of sight, and Peter sat on the water—kerplunk!

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Pat Parrot at the surprised Peter Pelican. "That wasn't a log that was Tommy Turtle!"

"Glub-glub!" spluttered Tommy, as he popped to the surface. "What's the idea of trying to drown me? Do I look like an airport?"

"Sorry, Tommy! I didn't see you," said Peter.

"Doesn't make sense," commented Pat.
"If you didn't see him, how could you land
on him?"

"Oh, skip it!" said Peter, opening his enormous beak and scooping it full of water.

"Help! Help!" yelled a voice. It seemed

to come from inside Peter's bill. And it did, for when Peter opened his bill again, out jumped Billy Bullfrog.

"Why aren't you more careful with that big shovel you call a bill?" exploded Billy.

"My mistake," said Peter Pelican. "All I wanted was a couple hundred little fishes. I'm going ashore before I make any more errors."

He lifted his wings, flapped them twice, and landed beside Pat Parrot on the edge of the pool. As he did so, Leo Lion appeared, lapped a cool drink, and looked up at them.

"Overheard Freddie complaining about the size of your bill," said Leo. "Shall we show them our circus trick?"

"Let's!" said Peter Pelican, and he opened his bill as wide as he could. Whereupon, Leo Lion went up to him and stuck his head inside it. There was plenty of room.

"Bravo!" said Tommy Turtle. "Sure is a whopper of a bill! Wonder how Peter got that way."

"Very simple," said Pat Parrot. "Anybody care to hear the story?" "Yes, Pat," said Leo. "Tell us why the Pelican has such a large bill."

"Well, it was exactly two million, twelve hundred and fourteen years ago that Peter's ancestor, Paul Pelican, started it all. In those day's Pelicans were very much as they are now—about the same size and color and shape. The only great difference lay in their bills which were very much smaller. In fact, they were far too tiny for such a large bird.

"Now, everybody knows that birds eat more than any other animal for their size. They have to eat a lot because they are so active—they need lots of food for energy. And the Pelicans then were the most active birds of all.

"They had to be on the go all day long. Their bills were so tiny that they could catch and eat only one little minnow at a time. From the earliest dawn to twilight they did nothing but fly around looking for fish. And the exercise only made them hungrier than ever!

"One night at dusk, Paul Pelican arrived home, tired and hungry. He was too tired to sleep, so he started thinking."

"'This is a silly business,' said he to himself. 'Here I've been on the go all day. I'm all in and just about famished! There's only one thing to do . . . I'm going on a diet. I can't be much hungrier than I am now anyway.'

"The next morning he stayed in his nest—he didn't even move an inch. After a while, he got bored and yawned. Mel Pelican, passing by, saw Paul and stopped.

"'What's the matter?' Mel asked. 'Are you ill?'

"'No, I just-' began Paul.

"You must be, poor fellow, or you

wouldn't be here! I'll get you something to eat.'

"Mel Pelican flew off and returned soon with a nice little fish. 'Open,' said he. Paul opened his beak, and Mel dropped the fish in. 'Thanks!' said Paul.

"Mel made a few more trips, each time returning with a fish. Then he went off and told all the Pelicans about poor Paul.

"Well, that was the beginning. Paul just stayed home all the time, while the Pelicans brought him food. Of course, his beak was open practically all the time. Either he'd open it each time they fed him, or else he'd open it wide to yawn. After all, there wasn't anything else to do.

"This went on day after day, and soon the Pelicans noticed that Paul's bill was getting bigger and bigger from keeping it open so much and from having it so full of fish. Then a couple of months later they began to get suspicious. For a sick Pelican, Paul had a wonderful appetite. They held a conference and appointed a committee to call on him.

"Of course, they soon found out that there was nothing wrong, so they stopped feeding him. Paul didn't care, because by that time his bill was as big as he was. All he had to do was swish it through the water, and he would catch more fish at one time than any other Pelican could catch all day. But Paul was a good sport. He made all the other Pelicans stay home while he fed them until their bills were as big as his.

"And that's why the Pelican has such a large bill," finished Pat Parrot.

Peter Pelican choked and coughed. Leo Lion slapped him on the back.

"It's O.K., Pat," said Leo. "Peter tried to swallow your story, but it wouldn't go down."











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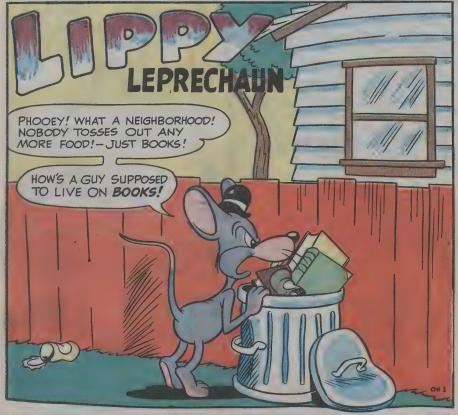
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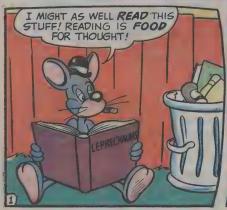
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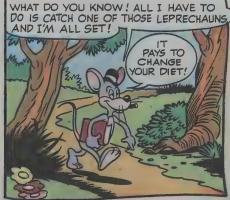










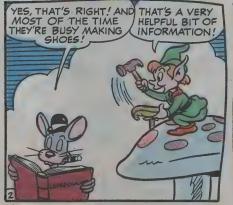


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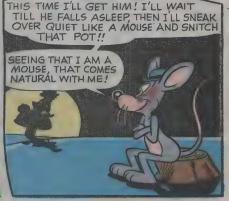
























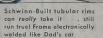








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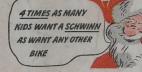




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